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1955/03/30

HEADQUARTERS
MILITARY ASSISTANCE ADVISORY GROUP, INDO-CHINA
SAIGON (Vietnam)

30 March 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Ambassador Collins

SUBJECT: Disturbance Night of March 29-30

1. I visited FAVN Headquarters at 0845, March 30 and had a conference with General TY, Colonel DON, Colonel MINH and Major Do Cao TRI, the CO of the 6th Parachute Bn, VNA, whose troops were first fired upon.

2. TRI's account is as follows:

He was ordered 3 days ago to send 1 company of the 6th Parachute Bn to the Prefecture of Police on Rue Gallieni. This as a result of a request by Mr. Huong, Prefect of Police made to Headquarters, FAVN.

TRI states that his orders were to guard the area and not to fire unless fired upon. He states that last night, March 29-30 at about mid-night, the attackers against the prefecture started the fireworks by throwing a smoke grenade and then opening up with machine-gun fire and killing the two parachute sentries at the entrance of the prefecture area. The Prefecture was then rushed and TRI's men opened up. The attackers used bazookas against the M-8 recon vehicles in the enclosure and succeeded only in destroying two tires. The attackers were prevented from entering the area by the defensive fires of the parachute company inside the prefecture area.

TRI called for a re-enforcing company and another platoon of M-8 recon vehicles. A counter-attack was launched by the original parachute company but failed. Upon the arrival of the 2d company, another counter-attack was launched. The attackers withdrew in haste according to TRI, "like scared rabbits". Seven dead of the attackers were counted and seven rifles with ammo and bazooka with ammo were captured by TRI.

TRI then moved toward FAVN Headquarters where the enemy was also threatening. The enemy had placed personnel with weapons at street intersections but they withdrew when the paratroopers and the M-8s' threatened.

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3. In front of the house of Mr. Lai Van Sang, director of the Surete, the paratroopers of the First Bn guarding FAVN Headquarters, were fired on from the house. One paratrooper was killed and five were wounded in this fracas.

4. General JACQUOT and General GAMBIEZ visited the area sometime during the night and cautioned the Vietnamese troops not to fire any more.

5. TRI reports that a platoon of M-24s' manned by French was in the area. The French stated that they had orders to guard the power-plant. The Vietnamese

were disturbed at the threatening attitude of the tankers who prevented TRI's men from passing certain points. The Vietnamese officers were also disturbed over the attitude of General JACQUOT whom they said accused the Vietnamese Army with starting the shooting.

Total casualties (Friendly)

1st Bn at FAVN area - 1 KIA & 5 WIA

3rd Bn, Park area near Palace - 1 killed by mortar fire

6th Bn at Prefecture - 2 KIA. 5 or 6 wounded.

Casualties (Enemy)

7 reported killed

Several wounded

6. I am convinced that the Vietnamese military were fired on first by the enemy. I am also of the conviction that the Vietnamese military conducted themselves in a creditable manner.

7. Colonel MINH, CO 1st Mil Region, informs me there are now 7 Bns of Inf in Saigon and 11 Companies from Quang Tri training center at the hippodrome. All have orders to shoot only when fired upon. The morale of the personnel I saw was very good.

8. My impression of Major TRI is that he is a first rate officer. I mentioned this to TY who said TRI was one of the best fighters in the Vietnamese Armed Forces during the shooting war against the Vietminh. I would like to have types like TRI in any combat units under my command. I hope you can meet him sometime. It does ones heart good to see such materiel.

JOHN W. O'DANIEL
Lieutenant General, USA
Chief

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